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(54) **GOLF CLUB HEADS AND METHODS TO MANUFACTURE GOLF CLUB HEADS**

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See application file for complete search history.

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(56)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *A63B 53/047* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0408* (2013.01); *A63B 2053/0491* (2013.01)

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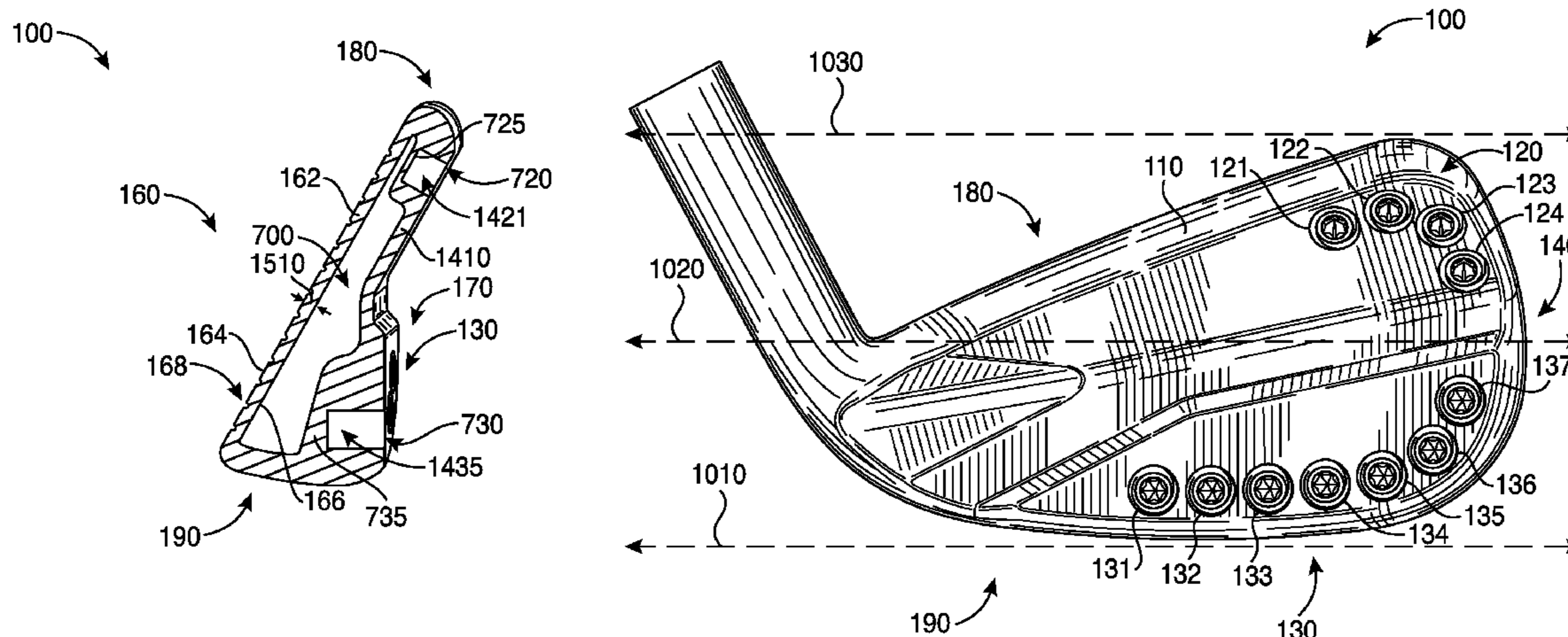
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ABSTRACT

Embodiments of golf club heads and methods to manufacture golf club heads are generally described herein. A golf club head includes a plurality of weight portions, a body portion having a face portion, a toe portion, a top portion, a sole portion, an interior cavity, and a back portion with a plurality of cylindrical weight ports configured to receive the plurality of weight portions. The interior cavity is filled with an elastic polymer material. Other examples and embodiments may be described and claimed.

20 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



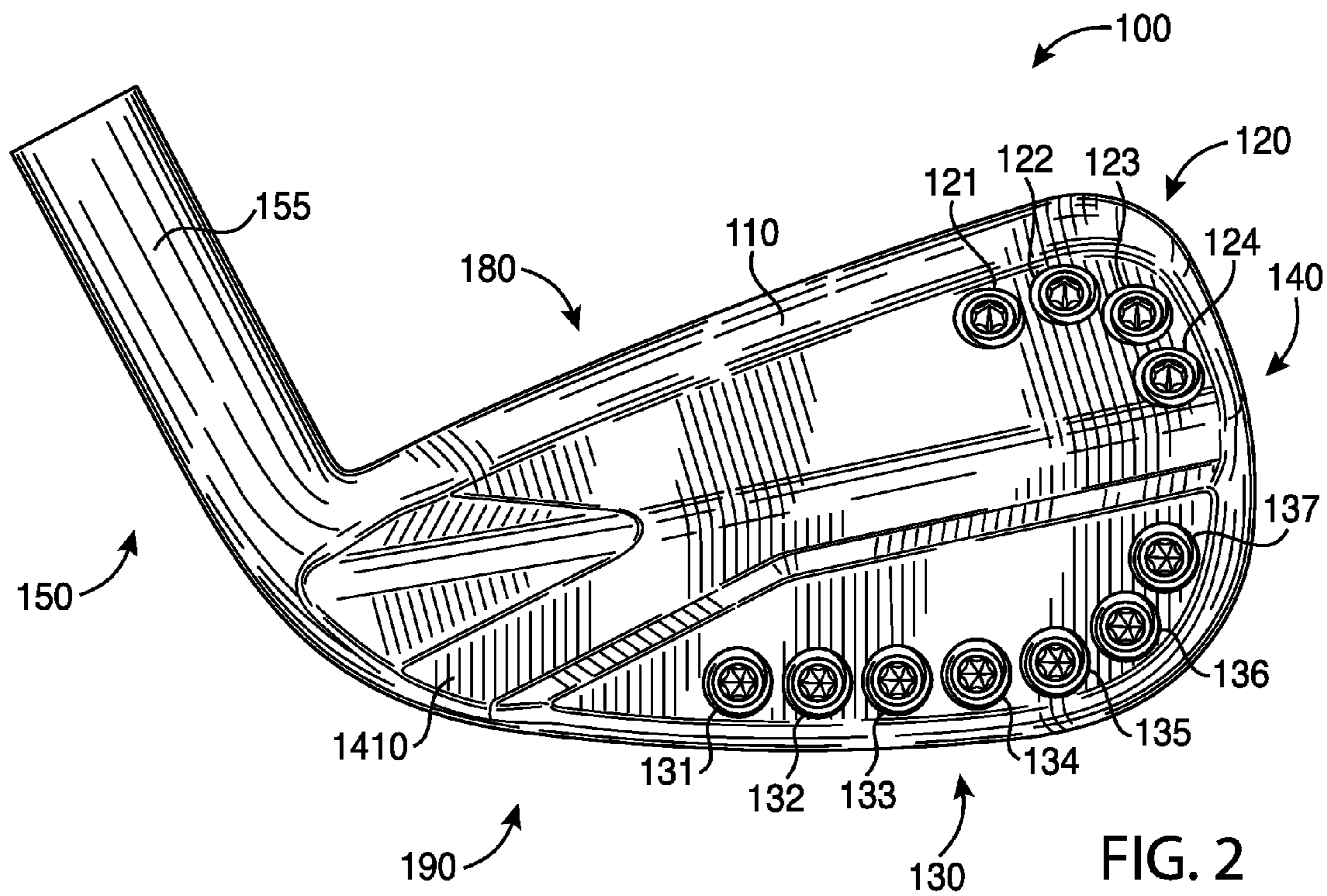
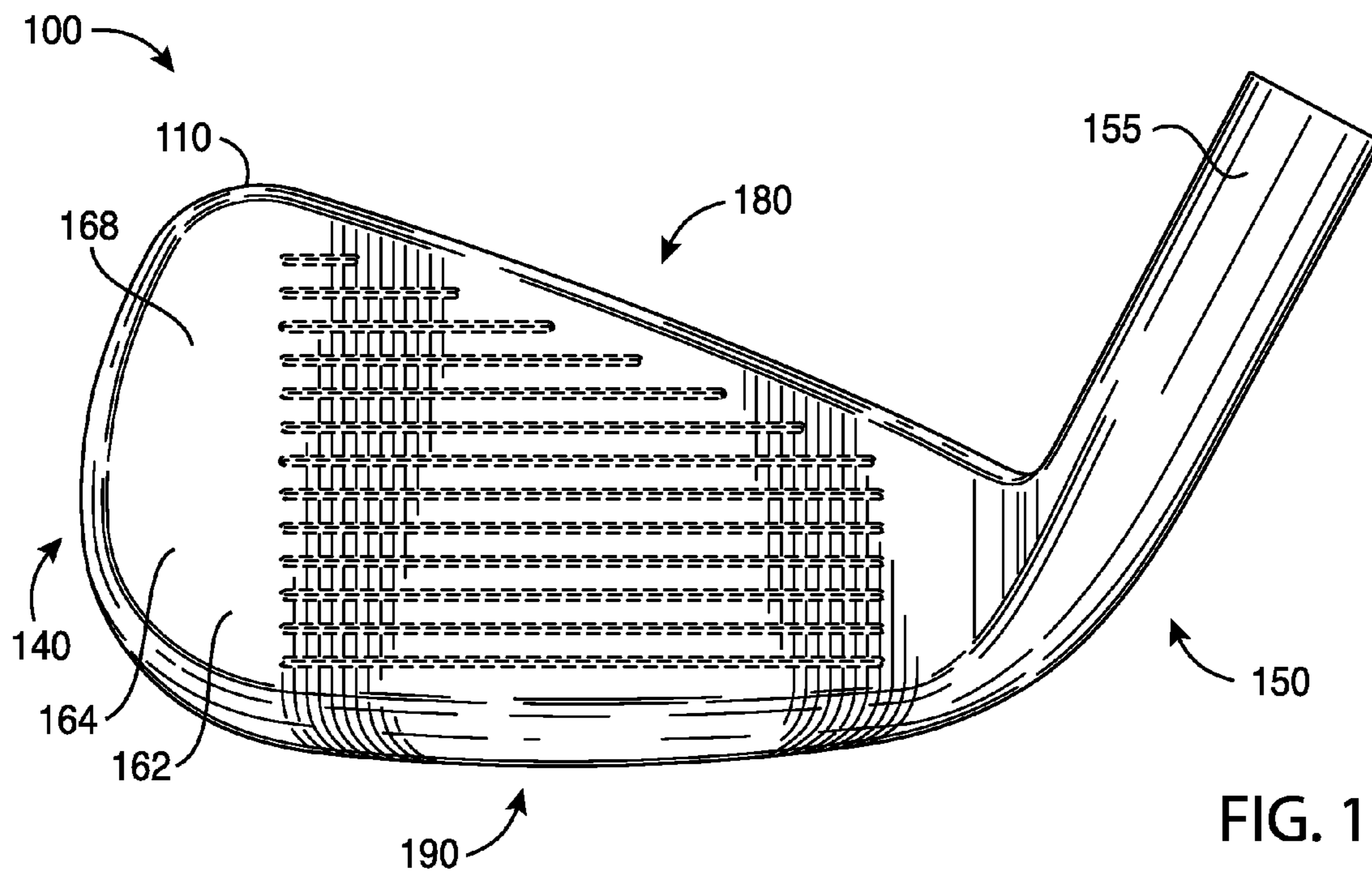
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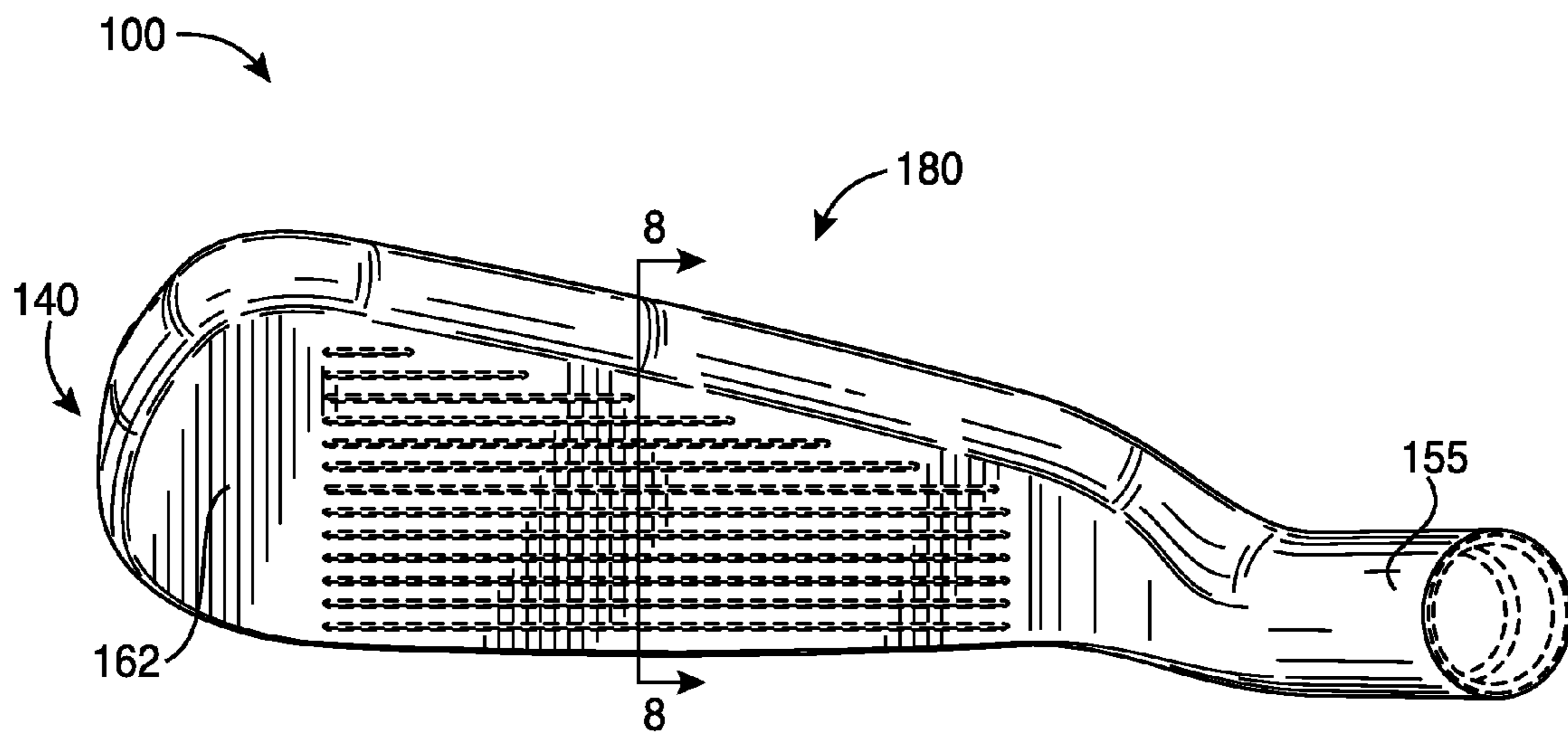


FIG. 3

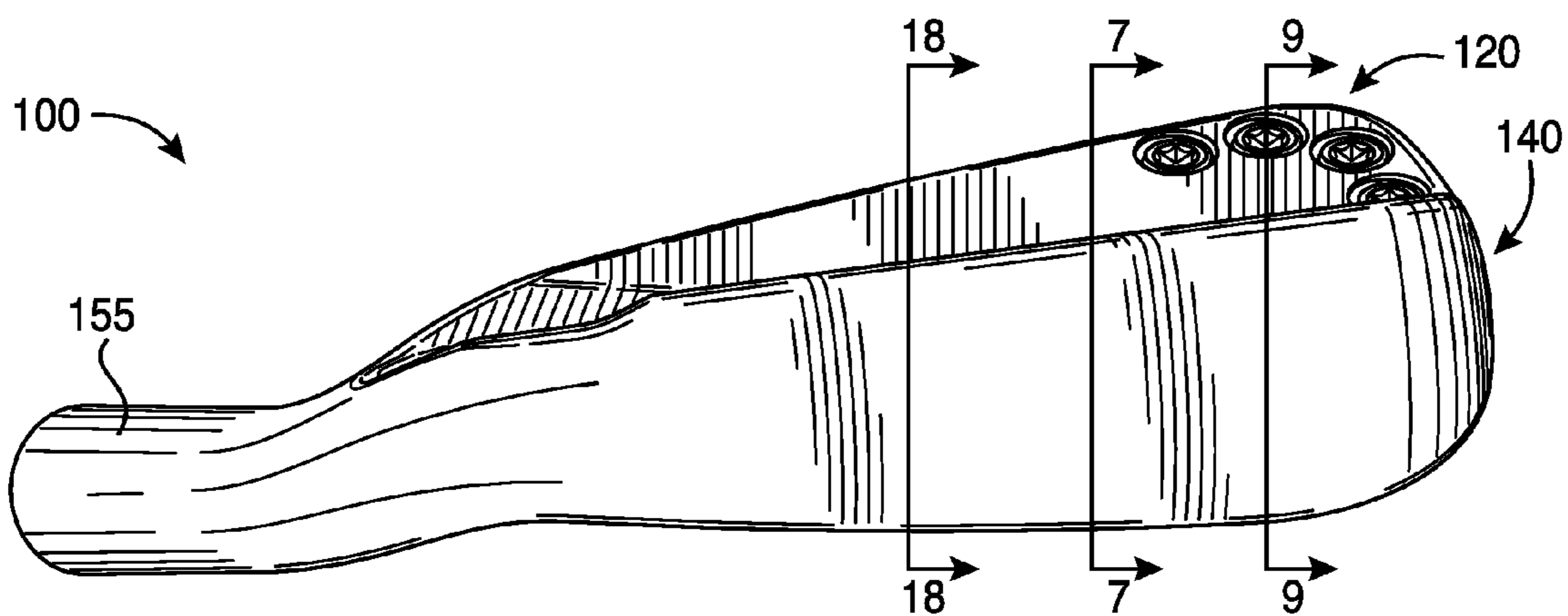
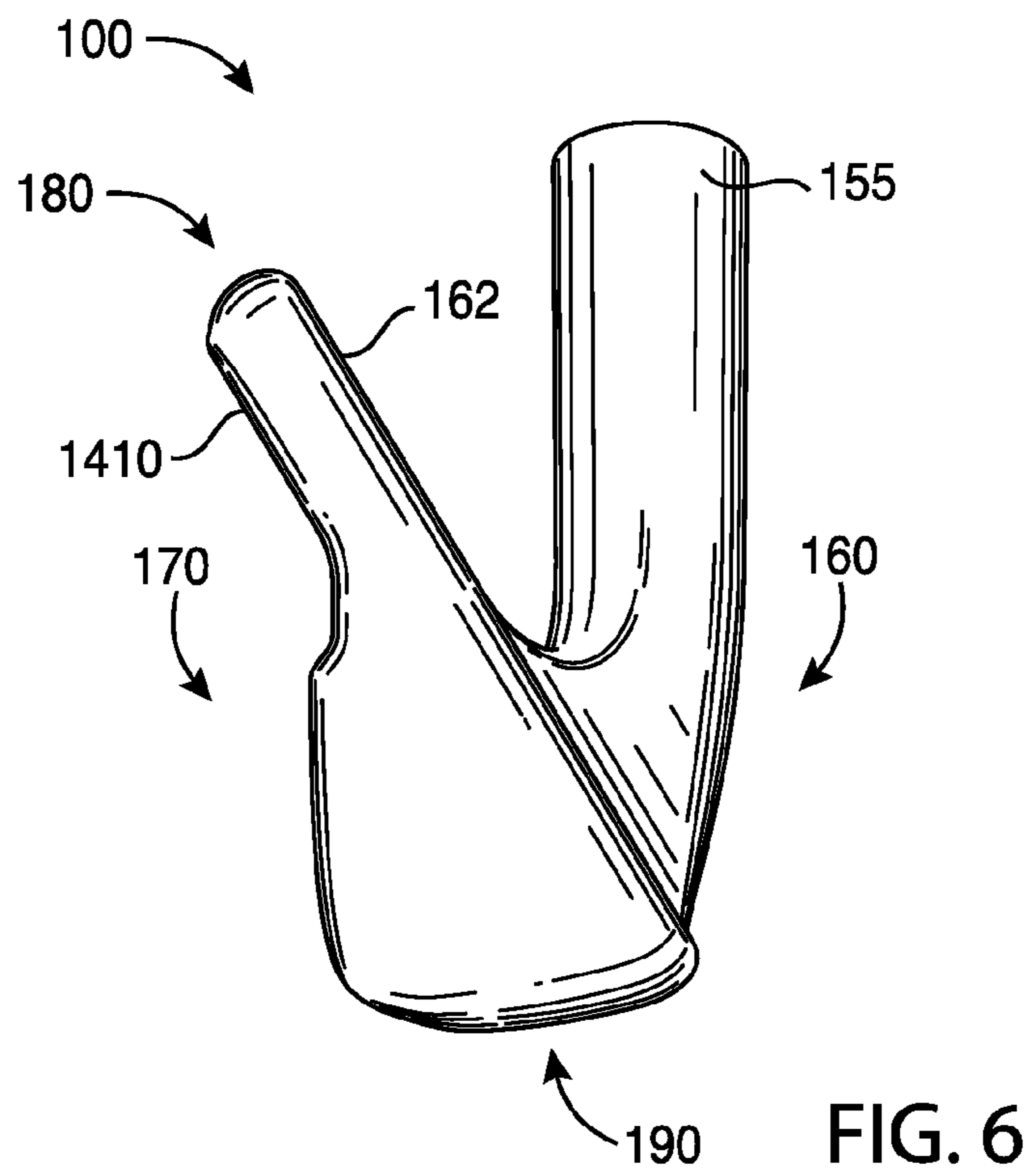
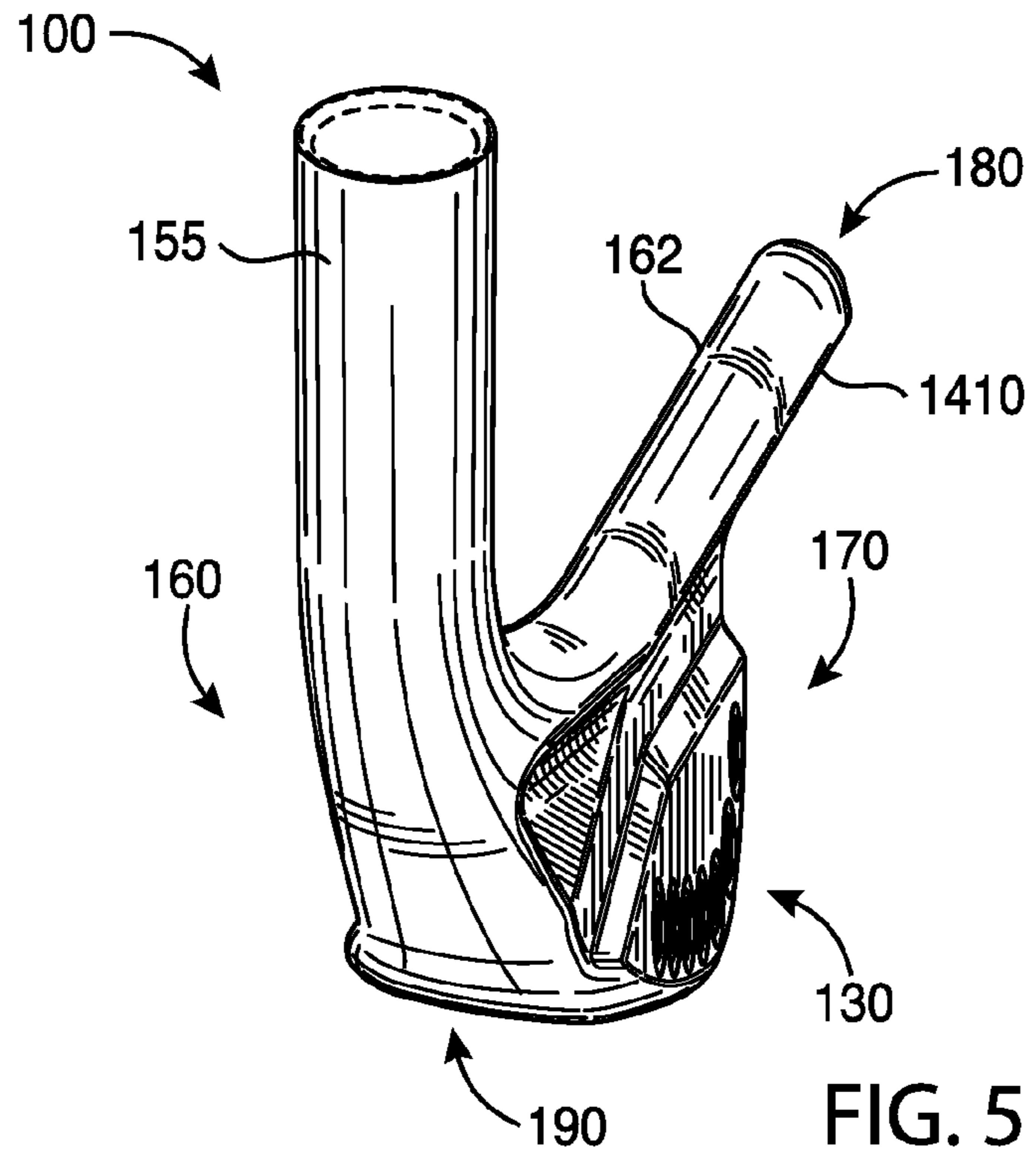


FIG. 4



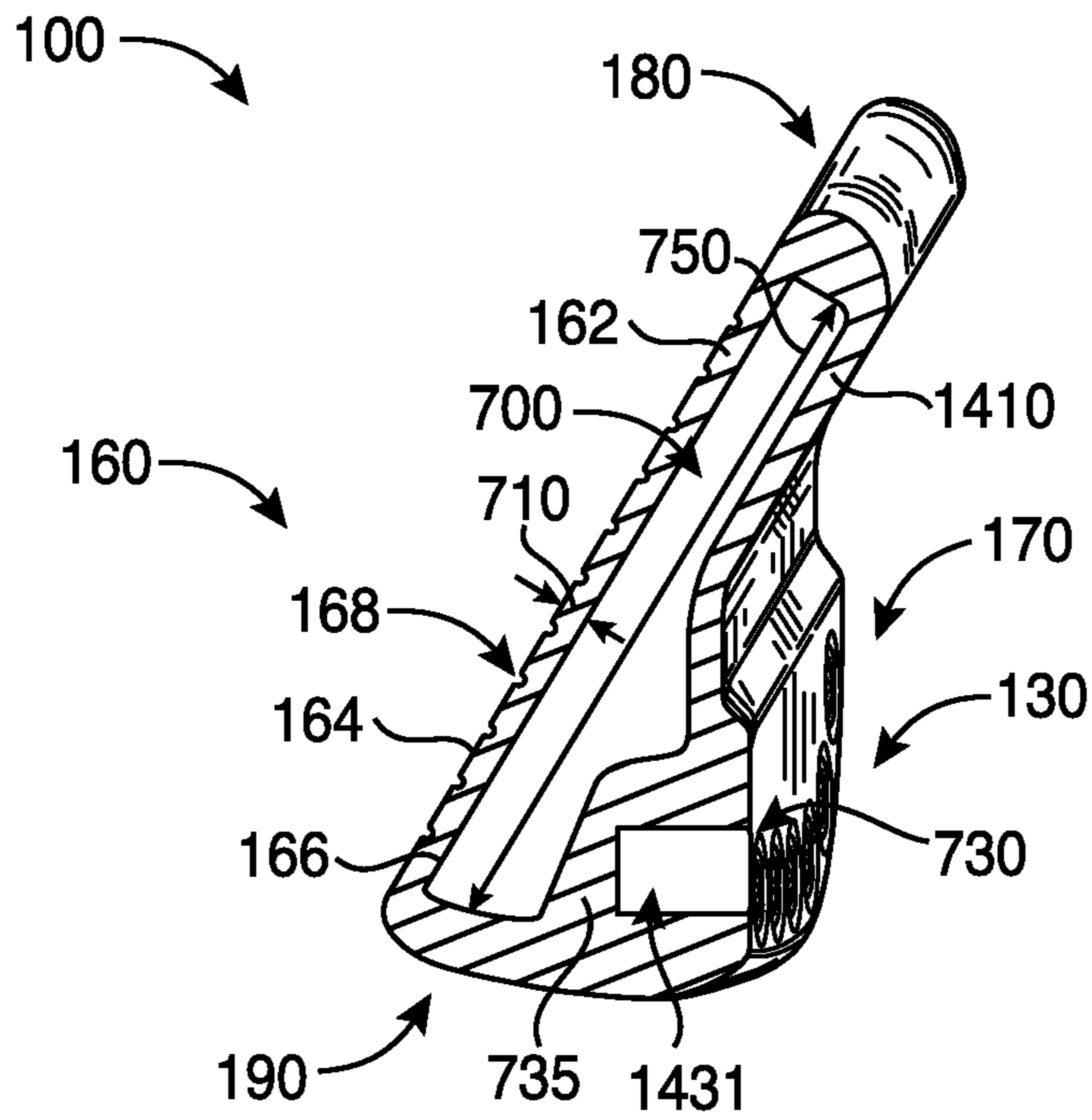


FIG. 7

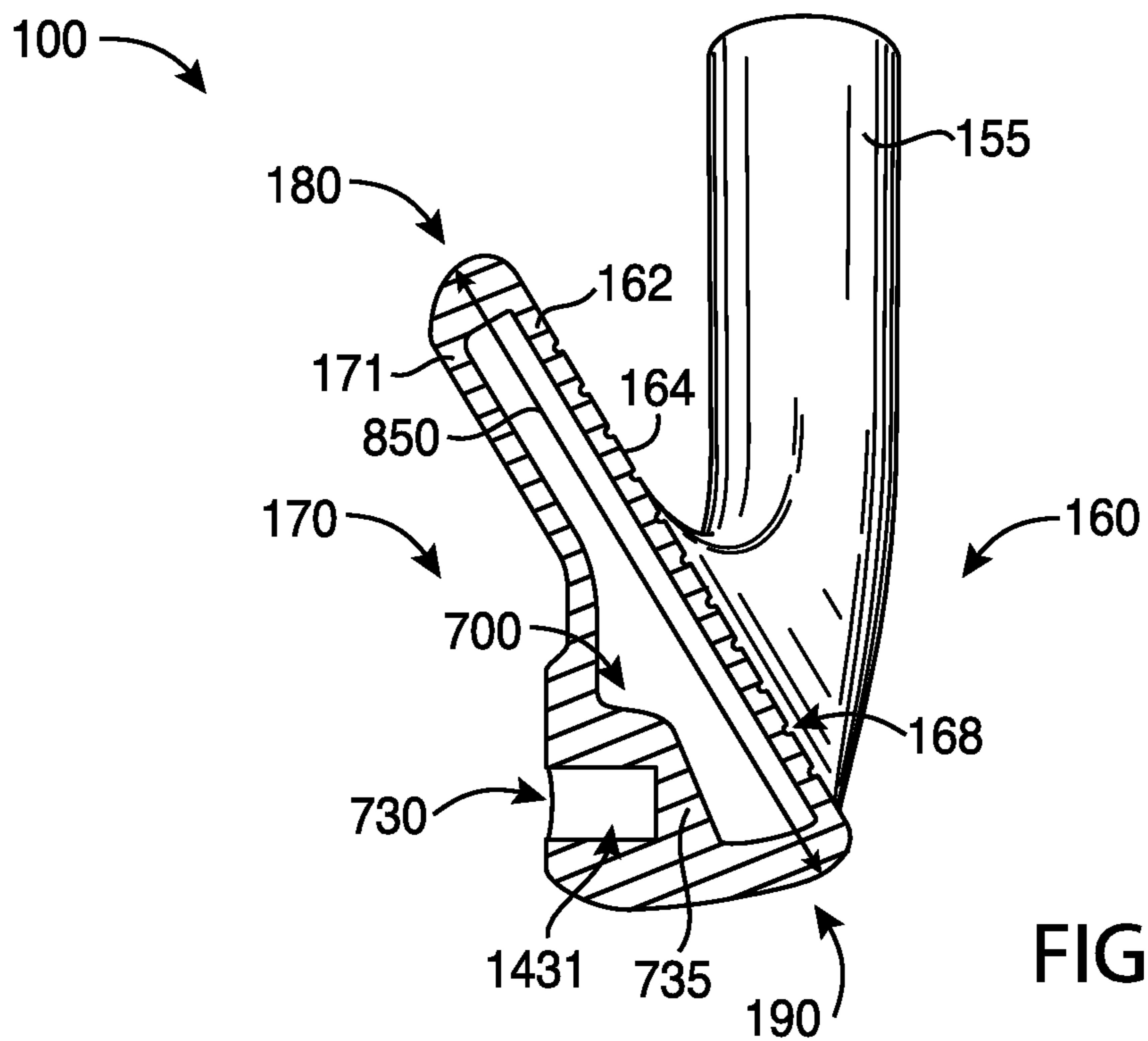


FIG. 8

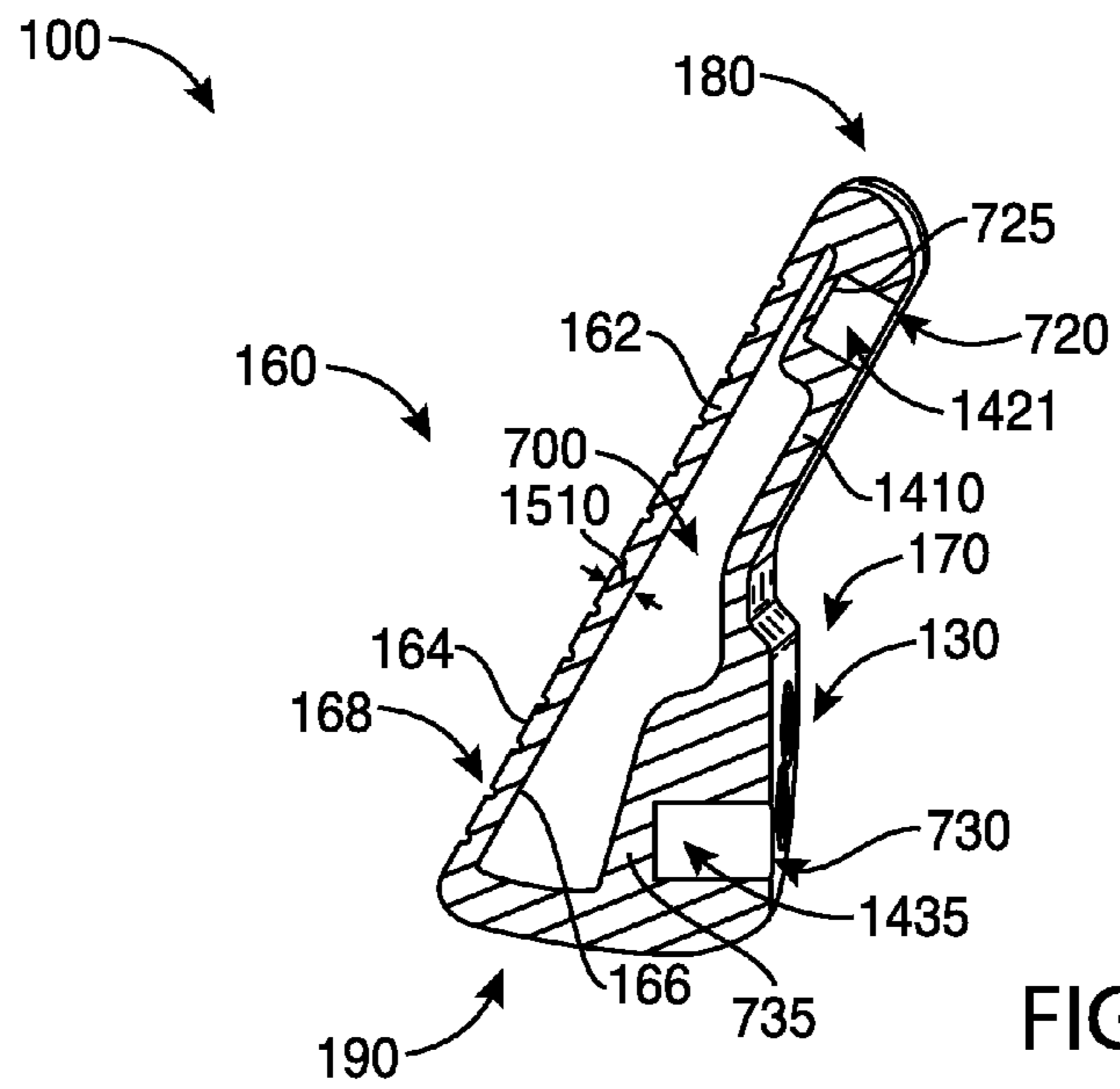


FIG. 9

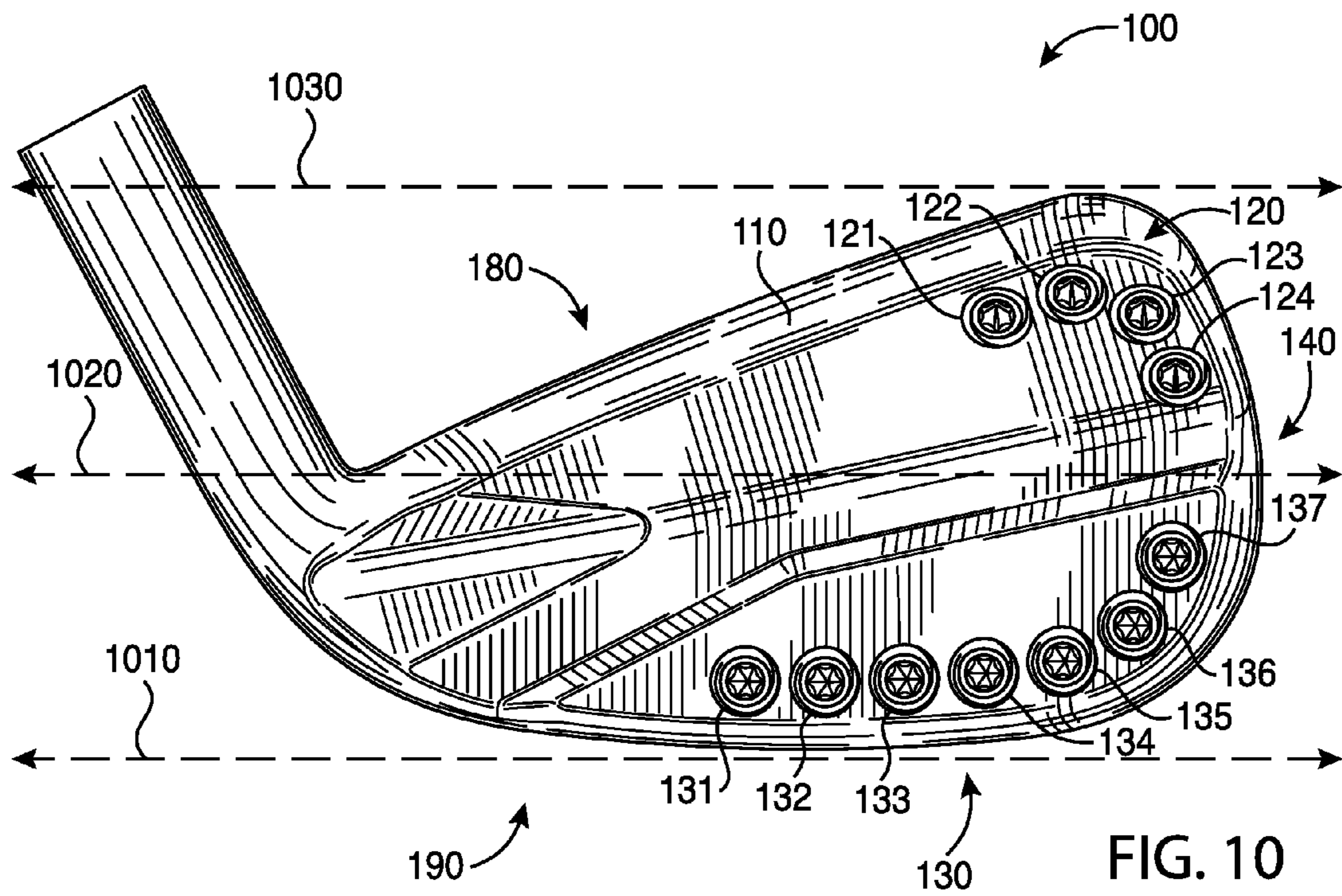


FIG. 10

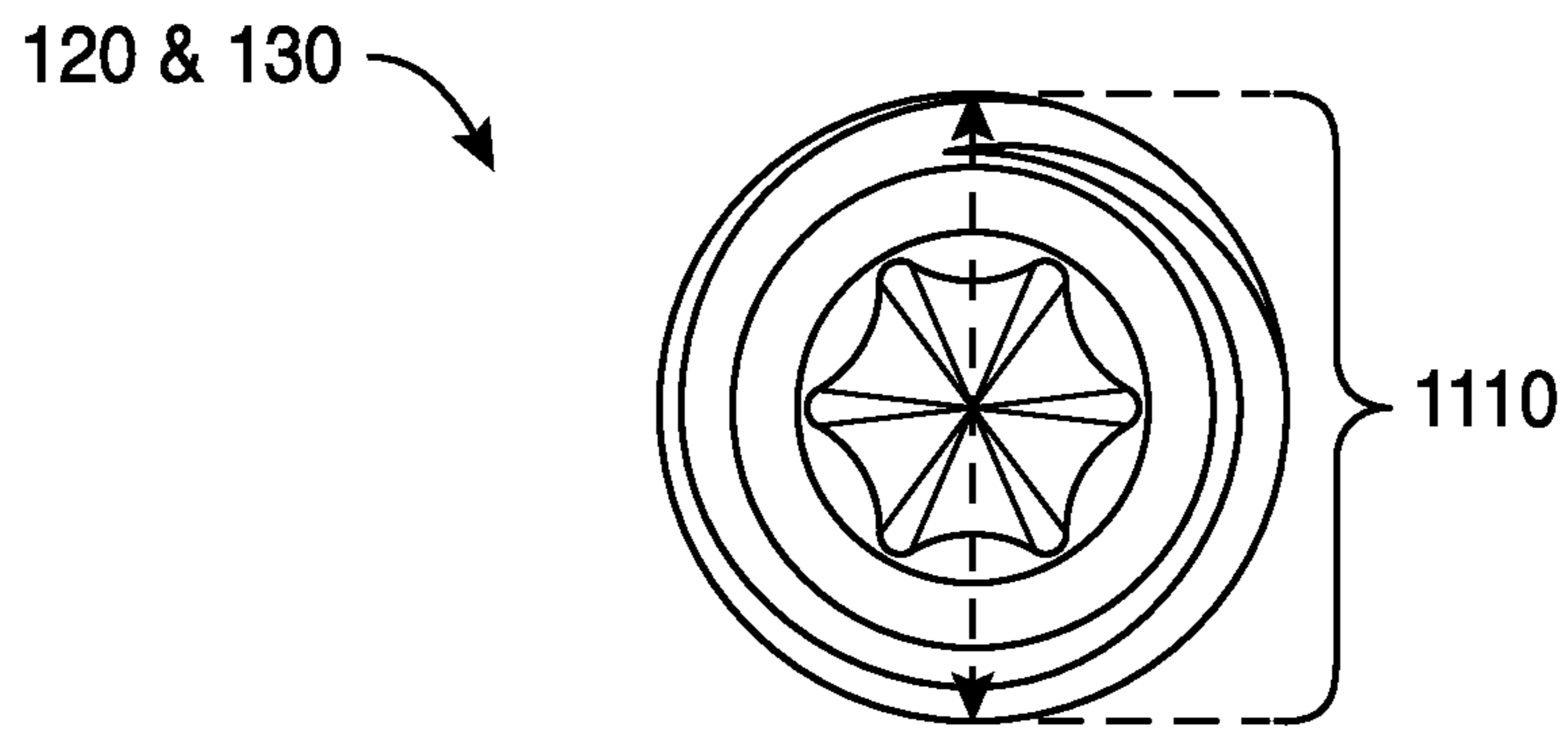


FIG. 11

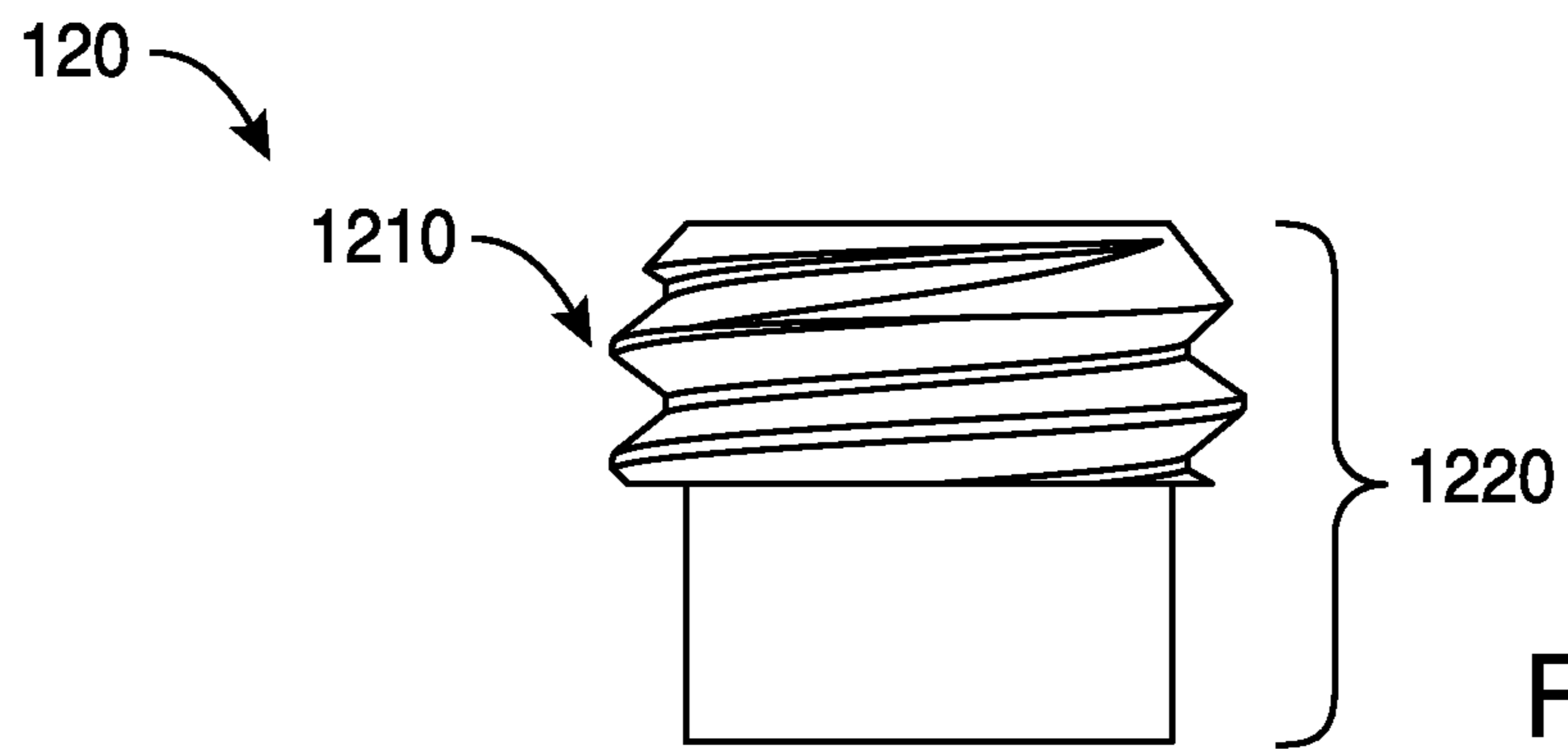


FIG. 12

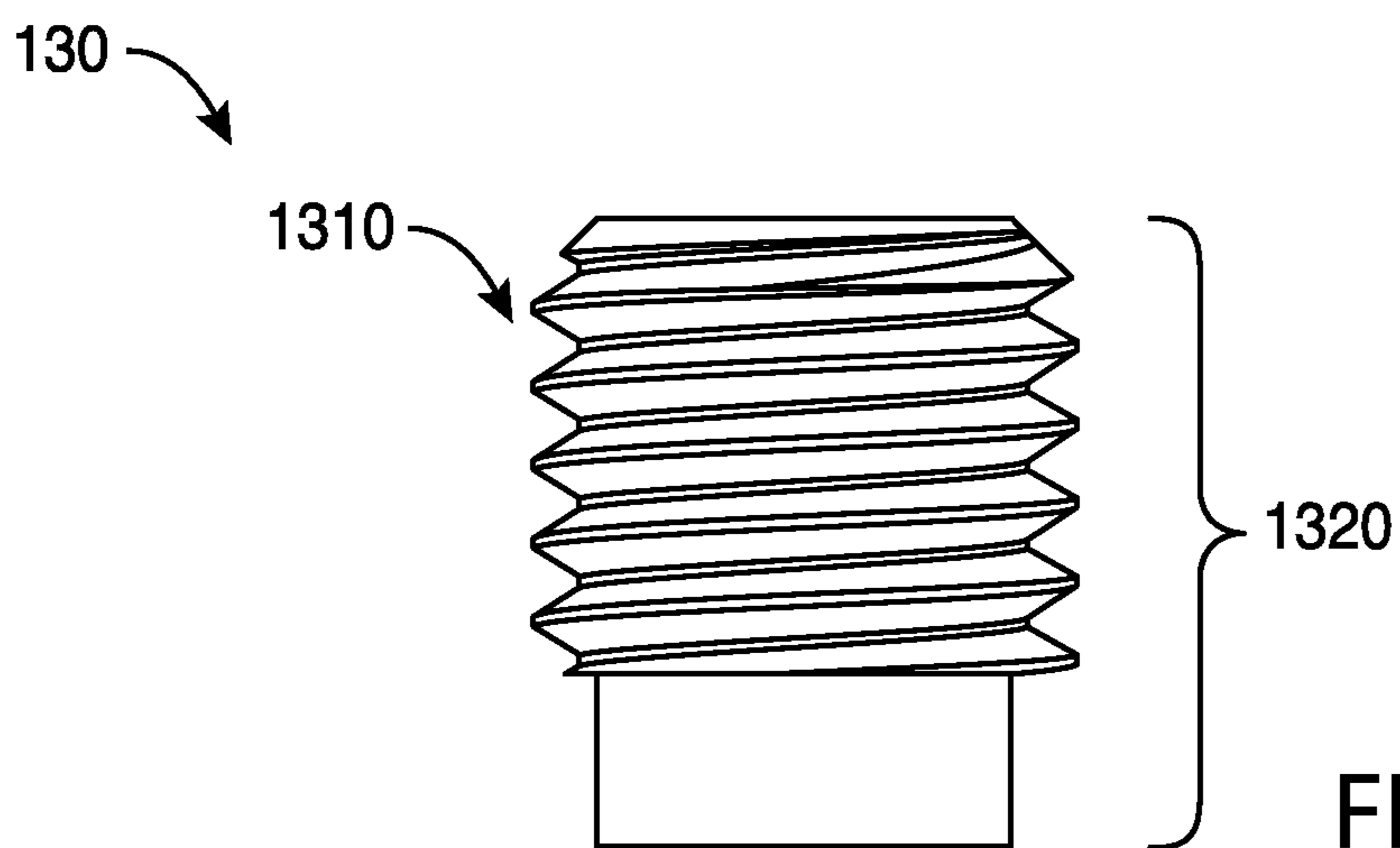
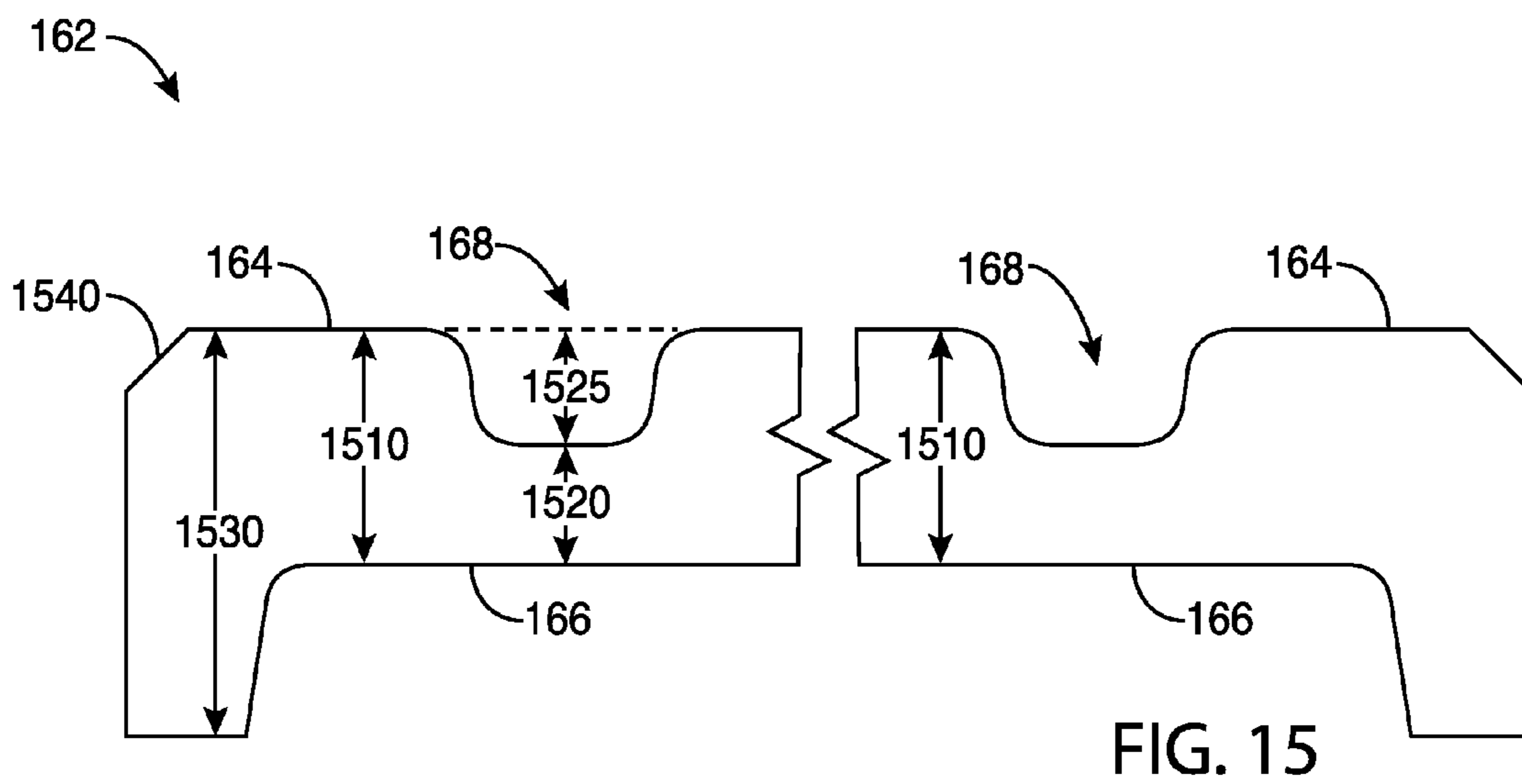
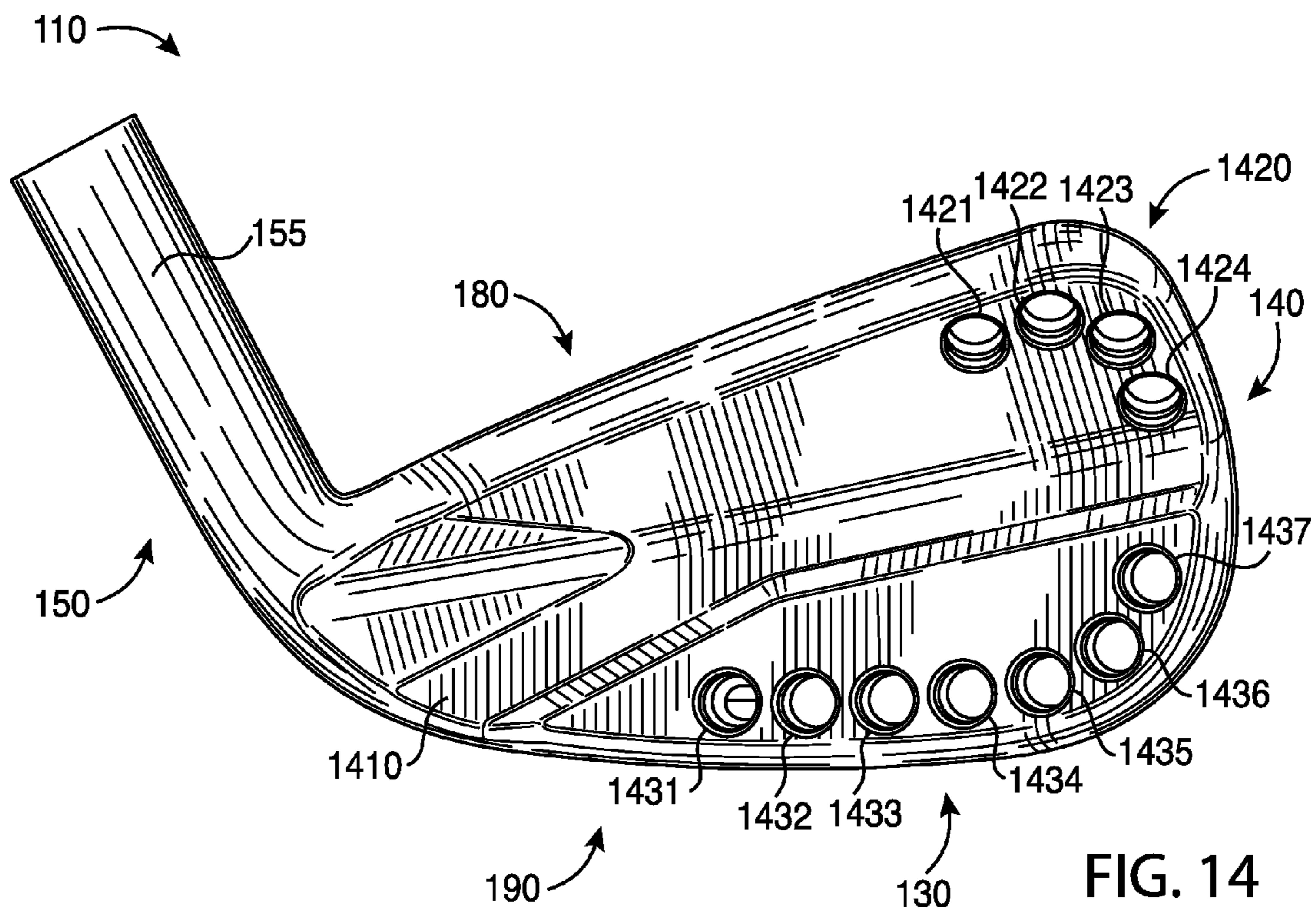


FIG. 13



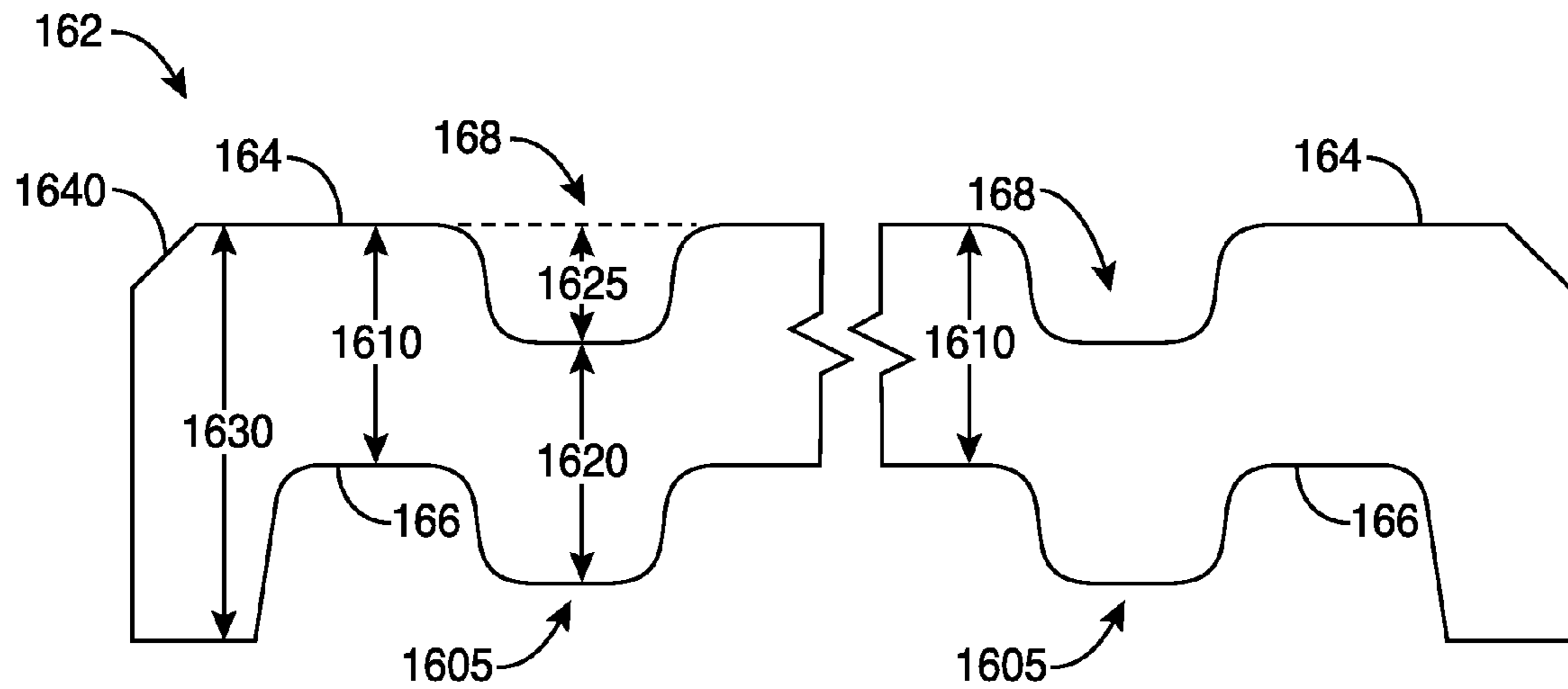


FIG. 16

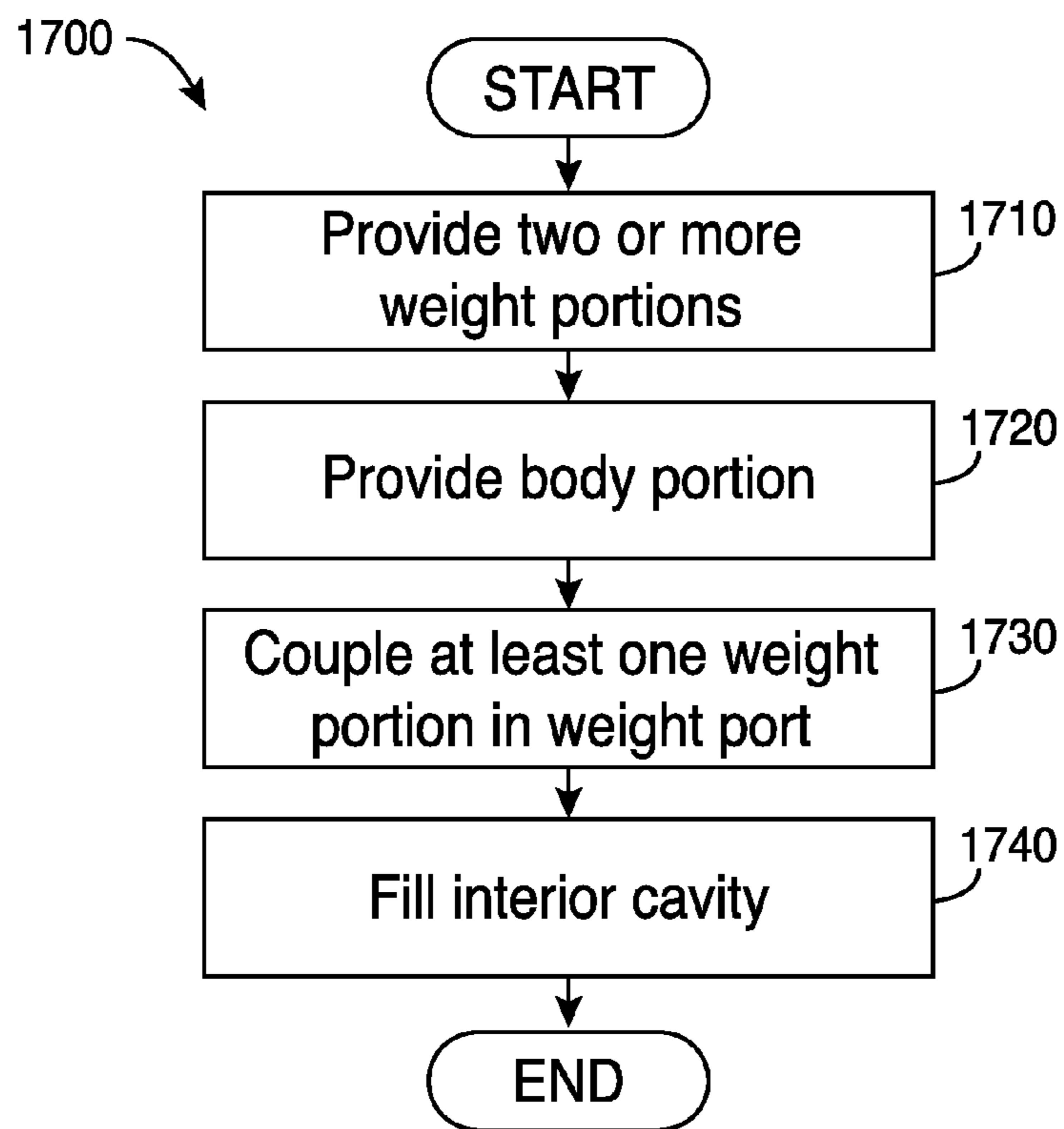


FIG. 17

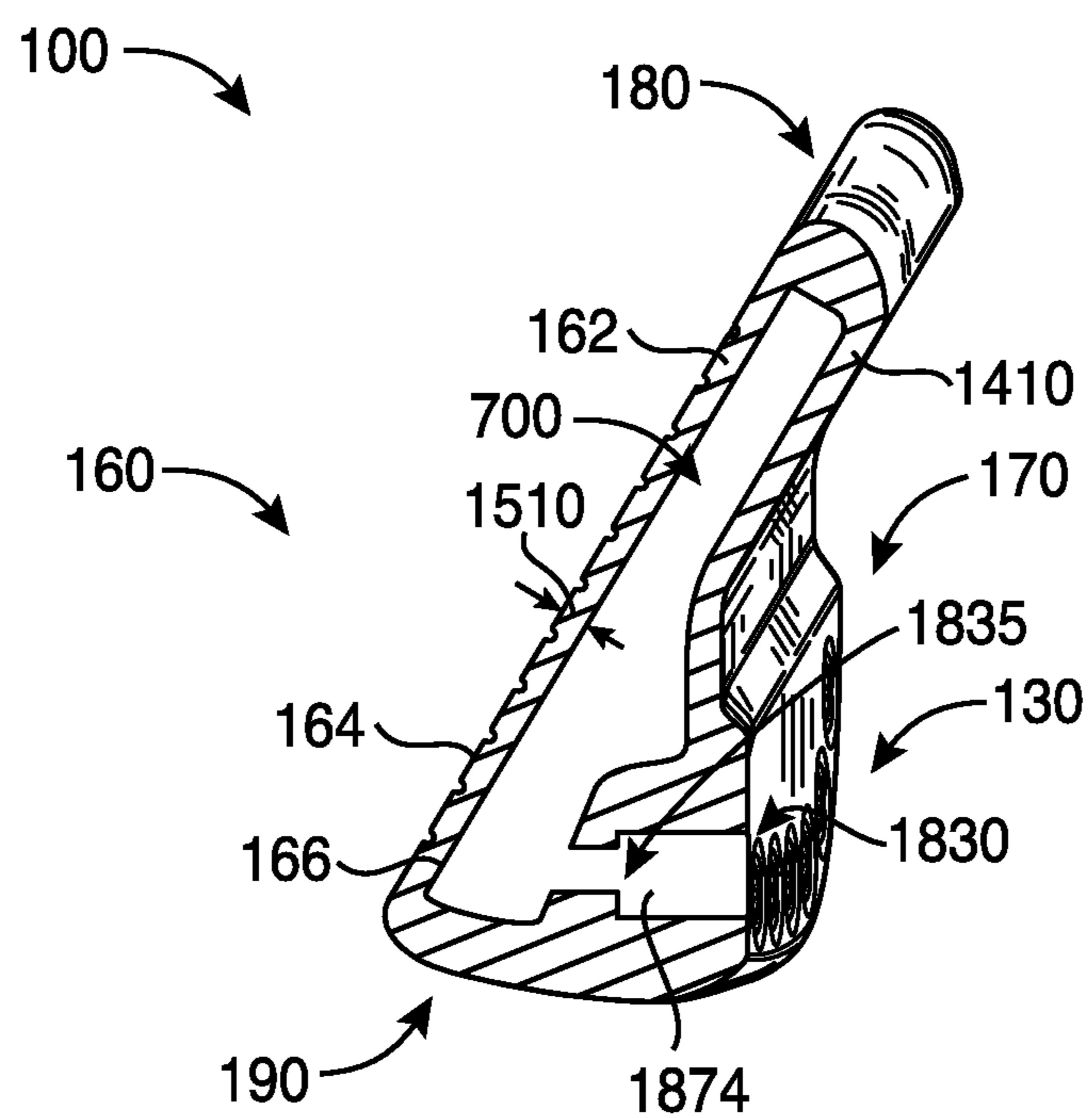


FIG. 18

GOLF CLUB HEADS AND METHODS TO MANUFACTURE GOLF CLUB HEADS

CROSS REFERENCE

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application 62/041,538 filed Aug. 25, 2014. This is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. Application Ser. No. 29/501,006, filed Aug. 29, 2014. The disclosures of the referenced applications are incorporated herein by reference.

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FIELD

The present disclosure generally relates to golf equipment, and more particularly, to golf club heads and methods to manufacturing golf club heads.

BACKGROUND

Various materials (e.g., steel-based materials, titanium-based materials, tungsten-based materials, etc.) may be used to manufacture golf club heads. By using multiple materials to manufacture golf club heads, the position of the center of gravity (CG) and/or the moment of inertia (MOI) of the golf club heads may be optimized to produce certain trajectory and spin rate of a golf ball.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a front view of a golf club head according to an embodiment of the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein.

FIG. 2 depicts a rear view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 depicts a top view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 depicts a bottom view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 depicts a left view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 6 depicts a right view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 7 depicts a cross-sectional view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1 along line 7-7.

FIG. 8 depicts a cross-sectional view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1 along line 8-8.

FIG. 9 depicts a cross-sectional view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1 along line 9-9.

FIG. 10 depicts another rear view of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 11 depicts a top view of a weight portion associated with the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 12 depicts a side view of a weight portion associated with the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 13 depicts a side view of another weight portion associated with the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 14 depicts a rear view of a body portion of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 15 depicts a cross-sectional view of a face portion of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 16 depicts a cross-sectional view of another face portion of the example golf club head of FIG. 1.

FIG. 17 depicts one manner in which the example golf club head described herein may be manufactured.

FIG. 18 depicts another cross-sectional view of the example golf club head of FIG. 4 along line 18-18.

For simplicity and clarity of illustration, the drawing figures illustrate the general manner of construction, and descriptions and details of well-known features and techniques may be omitted to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present disclosure. Additionally, elements in the drawing figures may not be depicted to scale. For example, the dimensions of some of the elements in the figures may be exaggerated relative to other elements to help improve understanding of embodiments of the present disclosure.

DESCRIPTION

In general, golf club heads and methods to manufacture golf club heads are described herein. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

In the example of FIGS. 1-14, a golf club head 100 may include a body portion 110 (FIG. 14), and two or more weight portions, generally shown as a first set of weight portions 120 (e.g., shown as weight portions 121, 122, 123, and 124) and a second set of weight portions 130 (e.g., shown as weight portions 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, and 137). The body portion 110 may include a toe portion 140, a heel portion 150, a front portion 160, a back portion 170, a top portion 180, and a sole portion 190. The body portion 110 may be made of a first material whereas the first and second sets of weight portions 120 and 130, respectively, may be made of a second material. The first and second materials may be similar or different materials. For example, the body portion 110 may be partially or entirely made of a steel-based material (e.g., 17-4 PH stainless steel, Nitronic® 50 stainless steel, maraging steel or other types of stainless steel), a titanium-based material, an aluminum-based material (e.g., a high-strength aluminum alloy or a composite aluminum alloy coated with a high-strength alloy), any combination thereof, and/or other suitable types of materials. The first and second sets of weight portions 120 and 130, respectively, may be partially or entirely made of a high-density material such as a tungsten-based material or other suitable types of materials. Alternatively, the body portion 110 and/or the first and second sets of weight portions 120 and 130, respectively, may be partially or entirely made of a non-metal material (e.g., composite, plastic, etc.). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture are not limited in this regard.

The golf club head 100 may be an iron-type golf club head (e.g., a 1-iron, a 2-iron, a 3-iron, a 4-iron, a 5-iron, a 6-iron, a 7-iron, an 8-iron, a 9-iron, etc.) or a wedge-type golf club head (e.g., a pitching wedge, a lob wedge, a sand wedge, an n-degree wedge such as 44 degrees (°), 48°, 52°, 56°, 60°, etc.). Although FIGS. 1-10 may depict a particular type of club head, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may be applicable to other types of club heads (e.g., a driver-type club head, a fairway wood-type club head, a hybrid-type club head, a putter-type club head, etc.). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

The toe portion 140 and the heel portion 150 may be on opposite ends of the body portion 110. The heel portion 150 may include a hosel portion 155 configured to receive a shaft

(not shown) with a grip (not shown) on one end and the golf club head **100** on the opposite end of the shaft to form a golf club.

The front portion **160** may include a face portion **162** (e.g., a strike face). The face portion **162** may include a front surface **164** and a back surface **166**. The front surface **164** may include one or more grooves **168** extending between the toe portion **140** and the heel portion **150**. While the figures may depict a particular number of grooves, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may include more or less grooves. The face portion **162** may be used to impact a golf ball (not shown). The face portion **162** may be an integral portion of the body portion **110**. Alternatively, the face portion **162** may be a separate piece or an insert coupled to the body portion **110** via various manufacturing methods and/or processes (e.g., a bonding process, a welding process, a brazing process, a mechanical locking method, any combination thereof, or other suitable types of manufacturing methods and/or processes). The face portion **162** may be associated with a loft plane that defines the loft angle of the golf club head **100**. The loft angle may vary based on the type of golf club (e.g., a long iron, a middle iron, a short iron, a wedge, etc.). In one example, the loft angle may be between five degrees and seventy-five degrees. In another example, the loft angle may be between twenty degrees and sixty degrees. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

As illustrated in FIG. **14**, the back portion **170** may include a back wall portion **1410** with one or more exterior weight ports along a periphery of the back portion **170**, generally shown as a first set of exterior weight ports **1420** (e.g., shown as weight ports **1421**, **1422**, **1423**, and **1424**) and a second set of exterior weight ports **1430** (e.g., shown as weight ports **1431**, **1432**, **1433**, **1434**, **1435**, **1436**, and **1437**). Each exterior weight port may be associated with a port diameter. In one example, the port diameter may be about 0.25 inch (6.35 millimeters). Any two adjacent exterior weight ports of the first set of exterior weight ports **1420** may be separated by less than the port diameter. In a similar manner, any two adjacent exterior weight ports of the second set of exterior weight ports **1430** may be separated by less than the port diameter. The first and second exterior weight ports **1420** and **1430** may be exterior weight ports configured to receive one or more weight portions. In particular, each weight portion of the first set **120** (e.g., shown as weight portions **121**, **122**, **123**, and **124**) may be disposed in a weight port located at or proximate to the toe portion **140** and/or the top portion **180** on the back portion **170**. For example, the weight portion **121** may be partially or entirely disposed in the weight port **1421**. In another example, the weight portion **122** may be disposed in a weight port **1422** located in a transition region between the top portion **180** and the toe portion **140** (e.g., a top-and-toe transition region). Each weight portion of the second set **130** (e.g., shown as weight portions **131**, **132**, **133**, **134**, **135**, **136**, and **137**) may be disposed in a weight port located at or proximate to the toe portion **140** and/or the sole portion **190** on the back portion **170**. For example, the weight portion **135** may be partially or entirely disposed in the weight port **1435**. In another example, the weight portion **136** may be disposed in a weight port **1436** located in a transition region between the sole portion **190** and the toe portion **140** (e.g., a sole-and-toe transition region). As described in detail below, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be coupled to the back portion **170** of the body portion **110** with various manufacturing methods and/or processes (e.g., a bonding process, a welding process, a brazing process,

a mechanical locking method, any combination thereof, or other suitable manufacturing methods and/or processes).

Alternatively, the golf club head **100** may not include (i) the first set of weight portions **120**, (ii) the second set of weight portions **130**, or (iii) both the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**. In particular, the back portion **170** of the body portion **110** may not include weight ports at or proximate to the top portion **170** and/or the sole portion **190**. For example, the mass of the first set of weight portions **120** (e.g., 3 grams) and/or the mass of the second set of weight portions **130** (e.g., 16.8 grams) may be integral part(s) the body portion **110** instead of separate weight portion(s). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

The first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may have similar or different physical properties (e.g., color, shape, size, density, mass, volume, etc.). As a result, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may contribute to the ornamental design of the golf club head **100**. In the illustrated example as shown in FIG. **11**, each of the weight portions of the first and second sets **120** and **130**, respectively, may have a cylindrical shape (e.g., a circular cross section). Alternatively, each of the weight portions of the first set **120** may have a first shape (e.g., a cylindrical shape) whereas each of the weight portions of the second set **130** may have a second shape (e.g., a cubical shape). In another example, the first set of weight portions **120** may include two or more weight portions with different shapes (e.g., the weight portion **121** may be a first shape whereas the weight portion **122** may be a second shape different from the first shape). Likewise, the second set of weight portions **130** may also include two or more weight portions with different shapes (e.g., the weight portion **131** may be a first shape whereas the weight portion **132** may be a second shape different from the first shape). Although the above examples may describe weight portions having a particular shape, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may include weight portions of other suitable shapes (e.g., a portion of or a whole sphere, cube, cone, cylinder, pyramid, cuboidal, prism, frustum, or other suitable geometric shape). While the above examples and figures may depict multiple weight portions as a set of weight portions, each set of the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be a single piece of weight portion. In one example, the first set of weight portions **120** may be a single piece of weight portion instead of a series of four separate weight portions. In another example, the second set of weight portions **130** may be a single piece of weight portion instead of a series of seven separate weight portions. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Referring to FIGS. **12** and **13**, for example, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may include threads, generally shown as **1210** and **1310**, respectively, to secure in the weight ports of the back portion **170** (generally shown as **1420** and **1430** in FIG. **14**). For example, each weight portion of the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be a screw. The first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may not be readily removable from the body portion **110** with or without a tool. Alternatively, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be readily removable (e.g., with a tool) so that a relatively heavier or lighter weight portion may replace one or more of the weight portions of the first and second sets **120** and **130**, respectively. In another example, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be secured in the weight

5

ports of the back portion **170** with epoxy or adhesive so that the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may not be readily removable. In yet another example, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be secured in the weight ports of the back portion **170** with both epoxy and threads so that the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may not be readily removable. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

As mentioned above, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be similar in some physical properties but different in other physical properties. As illustrated in FIGS. **11-13**, for example, each of the weight portions of the first and second sets **120** and **130**, respectively, may have a diameter **1110** of about 0.25 inch (6.35 millimeters) but the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be different in height. In particular, each of the weight portions of the first set **120** may be associated with a first height **1220** (FIG. **12**), and each of the weight portion of the second set **130** may be associated with a second height **1320** (FIG. **13**). The first height **1220** may be relatively shorter than the second height **1320**. In one example, the first height **1220** may be about 0.125 inch (3.175 millimeters) whereas the second height **1320** may be about 0.3 inch (7.62 millimeters). In another example, the first height **1220** may be about 0.16 inch (4.064 millimeters) whereas the second height **1320** may be about 0.4 inch (10.16 millimeters). Alternatively, the first height **1220** may be equal to or greater than the second height **1320**. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

To provide optimal perimeter weighting for the golf club head **100**, the first set of weight portions **120** (e.g., weight portions **121**, **122**, **123**, and **124**) may be configured to counter-balance the weight of the hosel **155**. The second set of weight portions **130** (e.g., weight portions **131**, **132**, **133**, **134**, **135**, **136**, and **137**) may be configured to place the center of gravity of the golf club head **100** at an optimal location. Turning to FIGS. **7-9**, for example, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be located away from the back surface **166** of the face portion **162** (e.g., not directly coupled to each other). That is, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, and the back surface **166** may be partially or entirely separated by an interior cavity **700** of the body portion **110**. As shown in FIG. **14**, for example, each exterior weight port of the first and second sets of exterior weight ports **1420** and **1430** may include an opening (e.g., generally shown as **720** and **730**) and a port wall (e.g., generally shown as **725** and **735**). The port walls **725** and **735** may be integral portions of the back wall portion **1410** (e.g., a section of the back wall portion **1410**). Each of the openings **720** and **730** may be configured to receive a weight portion such as weight portions **121** and **135**, respectively. The opening **720** may be located at one end of the weight port **1421**, and the port wall **725** may be located or proximate to at an opposite end of the weight port **1421**. In a similar manner, the opening **730** may be located at one end of the weight port **1435**, and the port wall **735** may be located at or proximate to an opposite end of the weight port **1435**. The port walls **725** and **735** may be separated from the face portion **162** (e.g., separated by the interior cavity **700**). As a result, the center of gravity (CG) of the golf club head **100** may be relatively farther back away from the face portion **162** and relatively lower towards a ground plane (e.g., one shown as **1010** in FIG. **10**) with the second set of weight portions **130** being away from the back surface **166** than if the second set of

6

weight portions **130** were directly coupled to the back surface **166**. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

While the figures may depict weight ports with a particular cross-section shape, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may include weight ports with other suitable cross-section shapes. In one example, the weight ports of the first and/or second sets of weight ports **1420** and **1430** may have U-like cross-section shape. In another example, the weight ports of the first and/or second set of weight ports **1420** and **1430** may have V-like cross-section shape. One or more of the weight ports associated with the first set of weight portions **120** may have a different cross-section shape than one or more weight ports associated with the second set of weight portions **130**. For example, the weight port **1421** may have a U-like cross-section shape whereas the weight port **1435** may have a V-like cross-section shape. Further, two or more weight ports associated with the first set of weight portions **120** may have different cross-section shapes. In a similar manner, two or more weight ports associated with the second set of weight portions **130** may have different cross-section shapes. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Referring back to FIG. **10**, for example, the golf club head **100** may be associated with a ground plane **1010**, a horizontal midplane **1020**, and a top plane **1030**. In particular, the ground plane **1010** may be a tangential plane to the sole portion **190** of the golf club head **100** when the golf club head **100** is at an address position (e.g., the golf club head **100** is aligned to strike a golf ball). A top plane **1030** may be a tangential plane to the top portion of the **180** of the golf club head **100** when the golf club head **100** is at the address position. The ground and top planes **1010** and **1030**, respectively, may be substantially parallel to each other. The horizontal midplane **1020** may be vertically halfway between the ground and top planes **1010** and **1030**, respectively.

The first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be similar in mass (e.g., all of the weight portions of the first and second sets **120** and **130**, respectively, weigh about the same). Alternatively, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be different in mass individually or as an entire set. In particular, each of the weight portions of the first set **120** (e.g., shown as **121**, **122**, **123**, and **124**) may have relatively less mass than any of the weight portions of the second set **130** (e.g., shown as **131**, **132**, **133**, **134**, **135**, **136**, and **137**). For example, the second set of weight portions **130** may account for more than 50% of the total mass from exterior weight portions of the golf club head **100**. As a result, the golf club head **100** may be configured to have at least 50% of the total mass from exterior weight portions disposed below the horizontal midplane **1020**. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

In one example, the golf club head **100** may have a mass in the range of about 220 grams to about 330 grams based on the type of golf club (e.g., a 4-iron versus a lob wedge). The body portion **110** may have a mass in the range of about 200 grams to about 310 grams with the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, having a mass of about 20 grams (e.g., a total mass from exterior weight portions). Each of the weight portions of the first set **120** may have a mass of about one gram (1.0 g) whereas each of the weight portions of the second set **130** may have a mass of about 2.4 grams. The sum of the mass of the first set of weight portions **120** may be about 3 grams whereas the sum of the mass of the first set of weight portions **130** may be about 16.8 grams. The total mass

of the second set of weight portions **130** may weigh more than five times as much as the total mass of the first set of weight portions **120** (e.g., a total mass of the second set of weight portions **130** of about 16.8 grams versus a total mass of the first set of weight portions **120** of about 3 grams). The golf club head **100** may have a total mass of 19.8 grams from the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively (e.g., sum of 3 grams from the first set of weight portions **120** and 16.8 grams from the second set of weight portions **130**). Accordingly, the first set of weight portions **120** may account for about 15% of the total mass from exterior weight portions of the golf club head **100** whereas the second set of weight portions **130** may be account for about 85% of the total mass from exterior weight portions of the golf club head **100**. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

By coupling the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, to the body portion **110** (e.g., securing the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130** in the weight ports on the back portion **170**), the location of the center of gravity (CG) and the moment of inertia (MOI) of the golf club head **100** may be optimized. In particular, the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may lower the location of the CG towards the sole portion **190** and further back away from the face portion **162**. Further, the MOI may be higher as measured about a vertical axis extending through the CG (e.g., perpendicular to the ground plane **1010**). The MOI may also be higher as measured about a horizontal axis extending through the CG (e.g., extending towards the toe and heel portions **150** and **160**, respectively, of the golf club head **100**). As a result, the club head **100** may provide a relatively higher launch angle and a relatively lower spin rate than a golf club head without the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Alternatively, two or more weight portions in the same set may be different in mass. In one example, the weight portion **121** of the first set **120** may have a relatively lower mass than the weight portion **122** of the first set **120**. In another example, the weight portion **131** of the second set **130** may have a relatively lower mass than the weight portion **135** of the second set **130**. With relatively greater mass at the top-and-toe transition region and/or the sole-and-toe transition region, more weight may be distributed away from the center of gravity (CG) of the golf club head **100** to increase the moment of inertia (MOI) about the vertical axis through the CG.

Although the figures may depict the weight portions as separate and individual parts, each set of the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be a single piece of weight portion. In one example, all of the weight portions of the first set **120** (e.g., shown as **121**, **122**, **123**, and **124**) may be combined into a single piece of weight portion (e.g., a first weight portion). In a similar manner, all of the weight portions of the second set **130** (e.g., **131**, **132**, **133**, **134**, **135**, **136**, and **137**) may be combined into a single piece of weight portion as well (e.g., a second weight portion). In this example, the golf club head **100** may have only two weight portions. While the figures may depict a particular number of weight portions, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may include more or less number of weight portions. In one example, the first set of weight portions **120** may include two separate weight portions instead of three separate weight portions as shown in the figures. In another example, the second set of weight portions **130** may include five separate weight portions instead of seven separate weight portions as shown in the figures. Alter-

natively as mentioned above, the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may not include any separate weight portions (e.g., the body portion **110** may be manufactured to include the mass of the separate weight portions as integral part(s) of the body portion **110**). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Referring back to FIGS. 7-9, for example, the body portion **110** may be a hollow body including the interior cavity **700** extending between the front portion **160** and the back portion **170**. Further, the interior cavity **700** may extend between the top portion **180** and the sole portion **190**. The interior cavity **700** may be associated with a cavity height **750** (H_C), and the body portion **110** may be associated with a body height **850** (H_B). While the cavity height **750** and the body height **850** may vary between the toe and heel portions **140** and **150**, the cavity height **750** may be at least 50% of a body height **850** ($H_C > 0.5 * H_B$). For example, the cavity height **750** may vary between 70-85% of the body height **850**. With the cavity height **750** of the interior cavity **700** being greater than 50% of the body height **850**, the golf club head **100** may be produce relatively more consistent feel, sound, and/or result when the golf club head **100** strikes a golf ball via the face portion **162** than a golf club head with a cavity height of less than 50% of the body height. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

In one example, the interior cavity **700** may be unfilled (i.e., empty space). The body portion **100** with the interior cavity **700** may weight about 100 grams less than the body portion **100** without the interior cavity **700**. Alternatively, the interior cavity **700** may be partially or entirely filled with an elastic polymer or elastomer material (e.g., a viscoelastic urethane polymer material such as Sorbothane® material manufactured by Sorbothane, Inc., Kent, Ohio), a thermoplastic elastomer material (TPE), a thermoplastic polyurethane material (TPU), and/or other suitable types of materials to absorb shock, isolate vibration, and/or dampen noise. For example, at least 50% of the interior cavity **700** may be filled with a TPE material to absorb shock, isolate vibration, and/or dampen noise when the golf club head **100** strikes a golf ball via the face portion **162**. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Turning to FIG. 15, for example, the face portion **162** may include a first thickness **1510** (T_1), and a second thickness **1520** (T_2). The first thickness **1510** may be a thickness of a section of the face portion **162** adjacent to a groove **168** whereas the second thickness **1520** may be a thickness of a section of the face portion **162** below the groove **168**. For example, the first thickness **1510** may be a maximum distance between the front surface **164** and the back surface **166**. The second thickness **1520** may be based on the groove **168**. In particular, the groove **168** may have a groove depth **1525** (D_{groove}). The second thickness **1520** may be a maximum distance between the bottom of the groove **168** and the back surface **166**. The sum of the second thickness **1520** and the groove depth **1525** may be substantially equal to the first thickness **1510** (e.g., $T_2 + D_{groove} = T_1$). Accordingly, the second thickness **1520** may be less than the first thickness **1510** (e.g., $T_2 < T_1$).

To lower and/or move the CG of the golf club head **100** further back, weight from the front portion **160** of the golf club head **100** may be removed by using a relatively thinner face portion **162**. For example, the first thickness **1520** may be about 0.075 inch (1.905 millimeters) (e.g., $T_1 = 0.075$ inch). With the support of the back wall portion **1410** to form the interior cavity **700** and filling at least a portion of the interior cavity **700** with an elastic polymer material, the face portion

162 may be relatively thinner (e.g., $T_1 < 0.075$ inch) without degrading the structural integrity, sound, and/or feel of the golf club head **100**. In one example, the first thickness **1510** may be less than or equal to 0.060 inch (1.524 millimeters) (e.g., $T_1 \leq 0.060$ inch). In another example, the first thickness **1510** may be less than or equal to 0.040 inch (1.016 millimeters) (e.g., $T_1 \leq 0.040$ inch). Based on the type of material(s) used to form the face portion **162** and/or the body portion **110**, the face portion **162** may be even thinner with the first thickness **1510** being less than or equal to 0.030 inch (0.762 millimeters) (e.g., $T_1 \leq 0.030$ inch). The groove depth **1525** may be greater than or equal to the second thickness **1520** (e.g., $D_{groove} \geq T_2$). In one example, the groove depth **1525** may be about 0.020 inch (0.508 millimeters) (e.g., $D_{groove} = 0.020$ inch). Accordingly, the second thickness **1520** may be about 0.010 inch (0.254 millimeters) (e.g., $T_2 = 0.010$ inch). In another example, the groove depth **1525** may be about 0.015 inch (0.381 millimeters), and the second thickness **1520** may be about 0.015 inch (e.g., $D_{groove} = T_2 = 0.015$ inch). Alternatively, the groove depth **1525** may be less than the second thickness **1520** (e.g., $D_{groove} < T_2$). Without the support of the back wall portion **1410** and the elastic polymer material to fill in the interior cavity **700**, a golf club head may not be able to withstand multiple impacts by a golf ball on a face portion. In contrast to the golf club head **100** as described herein, a golf club head with a relatively thin face portion but without the support of the back wall portion **1410** and the elastic polymer material to fill in the interior cavity **700** (e.g., a cavity-back golf club head) may produce unpleasant sound (e.g., a tinny sound) and/or feel during impact with a golf ball. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Based on manufacturing processes and methods used to form the golf club head **100**, the face portion **162** may include additional material at or proximate to a periphery of the face portion **162**. Accordingly, the face portion **162** may also include a third thickness **1530**, and a chamfer portion **1540**. The third thickness **1530** may be greater than either the first thickness **1510** or the second thickness **1520** (e.g., $T_3 > T_1 > T_2$). In particular, the face portion **162** may be coupled to the body portion **110** by a welding process. For example, the first thickness **1510** may be about 0.030 inch (0.762 millimeters), the second thickness **1520** may be about 0.015 inch (0.381 millimeters), and the third thickness may be about 0.050 inch (1.27 millimeters). Accordingly, the chamfer portion **1540** may accommodate some of the additional material when the face portion **162** is welded to the body portion **110**.

As illustrated in FIG. 16, for example, the face portion **162** may include a reinforcement section, generally shown as **1605**, below one or more grooves **168**. In one example, the face portion **162** may include a reinforcement section **1605** below each groove. Alternatively, face portion **162** may include the reinforcement section **1605** below some grooves (e.g., every other groove) or below only one groove. The face portion **162** may include a first thickness **1610**, a second thickness **1620**, a third thickness **1630**, and a chamfer portion **1640**. The groove **168** may have a groove depth **1625**. The reinforcement section **168** may define the second thickness **1620**. The first and second thicknesses **1610** and **1620**, respectively, may be substantially equal to each other (e.g., $T_1 = T_2$). In one example, the first and second thicknesses **1610** and **1620**, respectively, may be about 0.030 inch (0.762 millimeters) (e.g., $T_1 = T_2 = 0.030$ inch). The groove depth **1625** may be about 0.015 inch (0.381 millimeters), and the third thickness **1630** may be about 0.050 inch (1.27 millimeters). The groove **168** may also have a groove width. The width of

the reinforcement section **1605** may be greater than or equal to the groove width. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Alternatively, the face portion **162** may vary in thickness at and/or between the top portion **180** and the sole portion **190**. In one example, the face portion **162** may be relatively thicker at or proximate to the top portion **180** than at or proximate to the sole portion **190** (e.g., thickness of the face portion **162** may taper from the top portion **180** towards the sole portion **190**). In another example, the face portion **162** may be relatively thicker at or proximate to the sole portion **190** than at or proximate to the top portion **180** (e.g., thickness of the face portion **162** may taper from the sole portion **190** towards the top portion **180**). In yet another example, the face portion **162** may be relatively thicker between the top portion **180** and the sole portion **190** than at or proximate to the top portion **180** and the sole portion **190** (e.g., thickness of the face portion **162** may have a bell-shaped contour). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Different from other golf club head designs, the interior cavity **700** of the body portion **110** and the location of the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, along the perimeter of the golf club head **100** may result in a golf ball traveling away from the face portion **162** at a relatively higher ball launch angle and a relatively lower spin rate. As a result, the golf ball may travel farther (i.e., greater total distance, which includes carry and roll distances).

FIG. 17 depicts one manner in which the example golf club head described herein may be manufactured. In the example of FIG. 17, the process **1700** may begin with providing two or more weight portions, generally shown as the first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively (block **1710**). The first and second sets of weight portions **120** and **130**, respectively, may be made of a first material such as a tungsten-based material. In one example, the weight portions of the first and second sets **120** and **130**, respectively, may be tungsten-alloy screws.

The process **1700** may provide a body portion **110** having the face portion **162**, the interior cavity **700**, and the back portion **170** with two or more exterior weight ports, generally shown as **1420** and **1430** (block **1720**). The body portion **110** may be made of a second material, which is different than the first material. The body portion **110** may be manufacture using an investment casting process, a billet forging process, a stamping process, a computer numerically controlled (CNC) machining process, a die casting process, any combination thereof, or other suitable manufacturing processes. In one example, the body portion **110** may be made of 17-4 PH stainless steel using a casting process. In another example, the body portion **110** may be made of other suitable type of stainless steel (e.g., Nitronic® 50 stainless steel manufactured by AK Steel Corporation, West Chester, Ohio) using a forging process. By using Nitronic® 50 stainless steel to manufacture the body portion **110**, the golf club head **100** may be relatively stronger and/or more resistant to corrosion than golf club heads made from other types of steel. Each weight port of the body portion **110** may include an opening and a port wall. For example, the weight port **1421** may include the opening **720** and the port wall **725** with the opening **720** and the port wall **725** being on opposite ends of each other. The interior cavity **700** may separate the port wall **725** of the weight port **1421** and the back surface **166** of the face portion **162**. In a similar manner, the weight port **1835** may include the opening **730** and the port wall **735** with the opening **730** and the port wall **735** being on opposite ends of each

11

other. The interior cavity 700 may separate the port wall 735 of the weight port 1435 and the back surface 166 of the face portion 162.

The process 1700 may couple each of the first and second sets of weight portions 120 and 130 into one of the two or more exterior weight ports (blocks 1730). In one example, the process 1700 may insert and secure the weight portion 121 in the exterior weight port 1421, and the weight portion 135 in the exterior weight portion 1435. The process 1700 may use various manufacturing methods and/or processes to secure the first and second sets of weight portions 120 and 130, respectively, in the exterior weight ports such as the weight ports 1421 and 1435 (e.g., epoxy, welding, brazing, mechanical lock(s), any combination thereof, etc.).

The process 1700 may partially or entirely fill the interior cavity 700 with an elastic polymer material (e.g., Sorbothane® material) (block 1740). In one example, at least 50% of the interior cavity 700 may be filled with the elastic polymer material. As mentioned above, the elastic polymer material may absorb shock, isolate vibration, and/or dampen noise in response to the golf club head 100 striking a golf ball. In addition or alternatively, the interior cavity 700 may be filled with a thermoplastic elastomer material and/or a thermoplastic polyurethane material. As illustrated in FIG. 18, for example, the golf club head 100 may include one or more weight ports (e.g., one shown as 1431 in FIG. 14) with a first opening 1830 and a second opening 1835. The second opening 1835 may be used to access the interior cavity 700. In one example, the process 1700 (FIG. 17) may fill the interior cavity 700 with an elastic polymer material by injecting the elastic polymer material into the interior cavity 700 from the first opening 1830 via the second opening 1835. The first and second openings 1830 and 1835, respectively, may be same or different in size and/or shape. While the above example may describe and depict a particular weight port with a second opening, any other weight ports of the golf club head 100 may include a second opening (e.g., the weight port 720). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Referring back to FIG. 17, the example process 1700 is merely provided and described in conjunction with other figures as an example of one way to manufacture the golf club head 100. While a particular order of actions is illustrated in FIG. 17, these actions may be performed in other temporal sequences. For example, two or more actions depicted in FIG. 17 may be performed sequentially, concurrently, or simultaneously. In one example, blocks 1710, 1720, 1730, and/or 1740 may be performed simultaneously or concurrently. Although FIG. 17 depicts a particular number of blocks, the process may not perform one or more blocks. In one example, the interior cavity 700 may not be filled (i.e., block 1740 may not be performed). The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may be implemented in a variety of embodiments, and the foregoing description of some of these embodiments does not necessarily represent a complete description of all possible embodiments. Instead, the description of the drawings, and the drawings themselves, disclose at least one embodiment, and may disclose alternative embodiments.

As the rules of golf may change from time to time (e.g., new regulations may be adopted or old rules may be eliminated or modified by golf standard organizations and/or governing bodies such as the United States Golf Association (USGA), the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&A), etc.), golf equipment related to the apparatus, meth-

12

ods, and articles of manufacture described herein may be conforming or non-conforming to the rules of golf at any particular time. Accordingly, golf equipment related to the apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein may be advertised, offered for sale, and/or sold as conforming or non-conforming golf equipment. The apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture described herein are not limited in this regard.

Although certain example apparatus, methods, and articles of manufacture have been described herein, the scope of coverage of this disclosure is not limited thereto. On the contrary, this disclosure covers all apparatus, methods, and articles of articles of manufacture fairly falling within the scope of the appended claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf club head comprising:

a plurality of weight portions made of a first material, the plurality of weight portions being associated with a total weight portion mass; and

a body portion made of a second material, the body portion having a face portion, a toe portion, a top portion, a sole portion, an interior cavity extending between the top and sole portions, and a back portion with a plurality of cylindrical weight ports having a first set of cylindrical weight ports and a second set of cylindrical weight ports along a periphery of the back portion, each of the plurality of cylindrical weight ports is associated with a port diameter and configured to receive at least one weight portion of the plurality of weight portions,

wherein the first set of cylindrical weight ports is located at or proximate to at least one of the top portion or the toe portion, and the second set of cylindrical weight ports is located at or proximate to at least one of the sole portion or the toe portion,

wherein any two adjacent cylindrical weight ports of the first set of cylindrical weight ports are separated by less than the port diameter, and any two adjacent cylindrical weight ports of the second set of cylindrical weight ports are separated by less than the port diameter, and wherein the interior cavity is filled with an elastic polymer material.

2. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein the interior cavity comprises a cavity with at least 50% filled with a thermoplastic elastomer material.

3. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of cylindrical weight ports comprises a port wall separated from a back surface of the face portion by the elastic polymer material.

4. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein the plurality of weight portions comprises a first weight portion having a first weight portion mass and a second weight portion having a second weight portion mass, wherein the first weight portion mass is relatively less than the second weight portion mass.

5. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein each of the first and second sets of cylindrical weight ports comprises at least three cylindrical weight ports.

6. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein the plurality of weight portions comprises at least one weight portion made of a tungsten-based material.

7. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein the body portion comprises at least a portion made of stainless steel.

8. A golf club head as defined in claim 1, wherein the face portion comprises a thickness of less than or equal to 0.030 inch.

13

9. An iron-type golf club head comprising:
 two or more weight portions made of a first material, the
 two or more weight portions being associated with a
 total weight portion mass; and
 a hollow body portion made of a second material, the body
 portion having a face portion, a toe portion, a heel por- 5
 tion, a top portion, a sole portion, an interior cavity
 extending between the top and sole portions, and a back
 portion with two or more cylindrical weight ports along
 a periphery of the hollow body portion, each of the two 10
 or more cylindrical weight ports is associated with a port
 diameter and configured to receive at least one of the two
 or more weight portions,
 wherein the interior cavity is filled with an elastic polymer
 material, 15
 wherein a first cylindrical weight port is located at or proxi-
 mate to at least one of the top portion or the toe portion,
 and a second cylindrical weight port is located at or
 proximate to at least one of the sole portion or the toe
 portion, 20
 wherein any two adjacent cylindrical weight ports of the
 first set of cylindrical weight ports are separated by less
 than the port diameter, and any two adjacent cylindrical
 weight ports of the second set of cylindrical weight ports
 are separated by less than the port diameter. 25
10. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 9,
 wherein the two or more weight portions comprises weight
 portions with more than about 85% of the total weight portion
 mass being below the horizontal midplane of the golf club
 head. 30
11. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 9,
 wherein the interior cavity comprises a cavity height extend-
 ing between the top portion and a sole portion, the cavity
 height being at least 50% of a body height of the hollow body
 portion. 35
12. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 9,
 wherein the interior cavity comprises a cavity being at least
 50% filled with a thermoplastic elastomer material.
13. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 9,
 wherein each of the plurality of cylindrical weight ports com- 40
 prises a port wall separated from a back surface of the face
 portion by the elastic polymer material.
14. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 9,
 wherein the face portion comprises a thickness of less than or
 equal to 0.030 inch.

14

15. An iron-type golf club head comprising:
 a hollow body portion having a face portion, a toe portion,
 a top portion, a sole portion, a back portion, and an
 interior cavity extending between the top and sole por-
 tions, the interior cavity being filled with an elastic poly-
 mer material;
 a first set of cylindrical weight portions coupled to the
 hollow body portion at or proximate to a top-and-toe
 transition region between the top portion and the toe
 portion, the first set of cylindrical weight portions being
 associated with a first total mass; and
 a second set of cylindrical weight portions coupled the
 hollow body portion at or proximate to a sole-and-toe
 portions region between the sole portion and the toe
 portion, the second set of cylindrical weight portions
 being associated with a second total mass,
 wherein the first total mass is less than the second total
 mass, and
 wherein the second set of cylindrical weight portions is
 located below a horizontal midplane of the golf club
 head.
16. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 15,
 wherein each weight portion of the first set of cylindrical
 weight portions is associated with a first mass and each cylin-
 drical weight portion of the second set of cylindrical weight
 portions is associated with a second mass, and wherein the
 first mass is relatively less than the second mass.
17. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 15,
 wherein the interior cavity comprises a cavity having at least
 50% filled with a thermoplastic elastomer material.
18. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 15,
 wherein the hollow body portion comprises an interior cavity
 separating the face portion and the first and second sets of
 cylindrical weight portions. 35
19. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 15,
 wherein the plurality of cylindrical weight portions com-
 prises at least one cylindrical weight portion made of a tung-
 sten-based material. 40
20. An iron-type golf club head as defined in claim 15,
 wherein the face portion comprises a thickness of less than or
 equal to 0.030 inch.

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